

The Total Leader®



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Engage in Goal Setting for Direction

Most formal leadership roles begin and end with the working day, but personal leadership is constant. It includes every facet of life; it involves each action, thought, or attitude of all your waking hours. Personal leadership is not what you *do*, but what you *are* – at home, at work, in your social life, and when you are alone. Any plan for development of personal leadership must involve the whole person.

Goal setting establishes a relationship between where you are and where you are going. It sounds fairly basic. But few people have a goals program because they simply do not know where to begin. They have no idea of where they stand now. They have no clearly stated priorities or values and cannot, therefore, determine where they want to go. Even if they have grasped the basic concepts, they lack the experience to select challenging goals. They need help and direction to put theory into practice.

The growth of personal leadership in the various areas of life does not always proceed at the same rate of speed. When one need becomes urgent, others tend to take a less important place. Once an urgent need is satisfied, a need from another area of life may take top priority. Eventually, however, your

goals program should address all areas of life with the intent of developing a balanced personality that meets the need for the development of your full potential.

Write It Down

The importance of committing your plan to writing cannot be overemphasized. Definite plans produce definite results. But indefinite plans do not produce indefinite results; typically, they produce no results at all. As you develop a written plan, anticipate enjoying these benefits:

- ◆ *Focus.* Demands on your time and attention continuously bombard you. What seemed crystal clear only

yesterday becomes blurred and vague in the rush and urgency of today's affairs. Written goals serve as a reference and a reminder of your objectives. They keep you on course to progress and act as "interference blinders" that eliminate outside distractions and interruptions. A written plan conserves time and energy because you know at all times where you are going and what to do next. You never need to stop and wonder what is most important to you.



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- ◆ *Motivation.* Writing crystallizes thought, and crystallized thought motivates action. Merely seeing your goals on paper lends clarity to purpose and dedication to achievement. You push yourself to perform, to make your commitment come to pass.
- ◆ *Measurement.* Written goals serve as a yardstick of progress. Without written goals and deadlines, your memory becomes hazy; the yardstick is blurred and motivation is lost.
- ◆ *Compatibility.* Reducing your goals to writing assures their compatibility. Once you spread them out before you, any inconsistency between goals and values becomes apparent. Conflicts between individual goals in requirements for time and resources are immediately visible. You may then assign priorities and eliminate frustrations before serious damage occurs.
- ◆ *Stimulation.* Committing your plans to writing stimulates and helps form the habit of visualization that, in itself, lends creativity to all you undertake.
- ◆ *Self-fulfilling Prophecy.* When you have a written plan for achievement of your goals, your commitment to them becomes firm. You have a clear mental picture of who

you intend to become and what you plan to do. When goals are clear and vivid, they act as a magnetic force to draw you to them. They become a self-fulfilling prophecy and you gain from life exactly what you plan and expect to acquire.

Anticipation of Benefits

Make a written list of the rewards that will be yours when you achieve a goal. Include the advantages to be gained and the losses to be avoided. These are the compelling reasons you have for taking action to achieve your goal. When you know the benefits that will be yours, you have the courage and desire necessary to push ahead, to do the work and to overcome every roadblock.

As you list anticipated rewards, include those that are both tangible and intangible. List the possessions that will be yours and the position you will occupy, as well as the feeling of satisfaction and fulfillment you will enjoy. It does not matter whether the rewards you list would be meaningful to anyone else. If they are important to you, list them. Anticipating the enjoyment of the fruits of your labor stimulates you to redouble your efforts toward achievement. Visualizing the rewards of success is a concrete step toward achievement.

Use Your Potential to Succeed

We live in a world of abundance, with opportunity on every hand. We have been liberally endowed with talents and abilities, many of which we never use, and we can, through the power of choice, make of ourselves whatever we want.

If all people possess unlimited potential, and if the world is filled with abundance and opportunity, why are not all automatically successful? If it is true that we were created with a potential for high internal motivation, why do so many reach maturity only to find the level of motivation at a low ebb?

One reason for the lack of self-motivation is found in seemingly conflicting desires. We have a desire for personal leadership and purpose, but we also wish for acceptance by others. We are torn between being ourselves and gaining that acceptance. The dilemma is compounded by pressure from society: we are encouraged from birth to conform; seldom are we ever given encouragement to be ourselves.

As we constantly adjust to the complexities of social living and attempt to fulfill our various needs, we encounter a variety of motivation blocks. Leadership impulses and creativity are suppressed, restricted, or eliminated

completely. In order to get going again – to motivate ourselves – we must be able to see these motivation blocks as artificial barriers, and know how to deal with them. The pressure or influence of family, society and institutions is intended to be good, and much of it is good. We profit when we learn from all of those who have lived before us. But conditioning becomes a hindrance instead of a help when it stifles and cuts off any new contribution.

Here's a familiar example of the power of conditioning. When you go to the circus, you see a line of elephants each tethered by a rope around one foot to a small stake driven into the ground. As strong as elephants are, they can certainly pull the stakes out of the ground any time they choose. But they have been "conditioned." As baby elephants, they were chained to huge metal stakes driven well into the ground so that they could not pull them up. Weeks and months of tugging at strong stakes convinced the elephants that they could not pull loose. Now, although full grown with almost unlimited strength, any time they are fastened to a stake, they remember the futility of past efforts and do not try to free themselves. Some people are conditioned in the same way. It's vital for leaders to break the ties that hold them back and reach for their goals.

View the Usual in an Unusual Way

The crowning trait of personal leadership is creativity. Creativity is an even finer art than pure inventive genius. It is a conceptual skill, the willingness to innovate, to try the untried, and to see the usual in unusual ways, and to relate the normally unrelated.

Creativity abounds when your attitudes are uninhibited by conditioning and convention. Creativity allows you to face a changing world and an uncertain future without fear. You are competitive. You are comparatively at ease in unstructured situations and unperturbed even when conditions around you are out of control. You are never awed by mystery. You are a good person to have around during a crisis.

Creativity builds on a strong, mature personality and is expressed through self-respect, self-confidence and positive expectancy. It is the natural outgrowth of personal leadership.

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Are You a Valuable Leader?

Doubling your knowledge, hours on the job, or personal skills is not necessary to double your effectiveness and your value to the organization. The sports world provides a clear example of the slight edge. A baseball player with a .350 batting average often commands a salary many times that of a player who bats only .250. Yet the difference between the two is only one hit in every 10 times at bat. Even a small improvement in performance may increase your effectiveness, value, and return many times over.

Seriously consider changes you can make in these areas where the slight edge increases your value as a leader:

- ◆ Maintaining a climate of open communication and a spirit of cooperation enables you to maximize the interests and strengths of each team member. Not only do good human relations skills help you prevent problems, they can help you transform potential troublemakers into team players who are personally productive and exert a positive influence on other members of the group.
- ◆ Making sure that the work is done on time is one of your most important functions. A relatively small improvement in planning and scheduling could enable you to meet every deadline, prevent overtime, unjam bottlenecks, and reduce the frustration from working from a crisis position.
- ◆ Controlling your time frees the critical hours required for planning and scheduling. Effective time management allows you to target your number one priority, enhances performance, increases productivity, and adds momentum to your pursuit of long-term goals.
- ◆ Improve decision-making and problem-solving skills and you gain a slight edge that pays enormous dividends. A decision correctly made at the right time or a problem solved when it first surfaces is far more valuable than trying to put the pieces back together after a crisis. Preventing a fire requires far less time and effort than fighting a blaze raging out of control.
- ◆ The members of your work group, department, or division bring a variety of talents, training, interests, and commitment to the goals of your organization. Learn to meld your team into a smoothly functioning unit and to focus the resulting synergistic force on the accomplishment of organizational goals.
- ◆ When you improve your ability to think of the potential of the organization as a whole, you enhance relationships with people at every level of the organization. You make more effective decisions and increase the value of your contribution to the overall objectives of the organization. An important part of your contribution is your ability to train others and get them to accept responsibility so they become increasingly effective team members.
- ◆ Demonstrate in your words and actions an “attitude of ownership” toward your work. When you encourage an attitude of ownership among employees, they gain a sense of belonging and importance, and the quality of their work reflects this. An attitude of ownership causes you and your staff to take pride in what you do.



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Solve Problems with Strong Leadership

How do you make decisions? Problem solving is closely related to decision making. The processes are much the same. The first step in problem solving is to define the problem by evaluating the difference between the current situation and the desired goal. In other words, a problem is the difference between the goal and the result. The sooner you observe and correct any deviation between the goal and result, the smaller the problem will be.

Part of defining the problem is also identifying the causes. At times, the apparent problem is not the real one; it is merely a symptom. The real problem may be hidden beneath defensive accusations, confusing data, complex processes and procedures, or poorly constructed reports. Be sure you address the causes rather than the symptoms.

For example, one individual on your team may continually bombard you with questions. You need to ask yourself: Is that really the problem? Or is it a symptom of a lack of training? Or is the real problem that this person once received a harsh reprimand for a decision and is now hesitant to proceed without prior approval? You can usually narrow down inadequate performance to one of these three root problems: training, environment, or motivation.

After you define the problem, you need to decide whether it is even a problem that must be solved. Some problems resolve themselves in a short time without any action. Other problems are not worth your time to take action to solve. Spend a hundred dollars' worth of your time on hundred dollar problems, not twenty dollar problems. If a problem is not worth your time, assign the solving of it to someone else who is paid less than you are. Of course, you need to make sure that it will be solved before it becomes a more costly problem.

When the problem does require your attention to be solved, use this time proven formula for approaching the problem:

- ◆ Define the problem. Make sure the real problem is defined clearly and relates to an important organizational or personal goal. Address causes, not effects or symptoms. You may find that a number of negative symptoms may all have the same root cause. By dealing with the root cause, you may solve more than one problem at a time.
- ◆ Set a deadline for making the final decision about a

solution to be chosen. Allow adequate time to gather information, suggestions, and opinions from others.

- ◆ Identify the purpose to be met by the solution. Refer to specific organizational and personal goals as guidelines for deciding exactly what the solution must accomplish. This prevents investing too much time and material in solving a relatively minor problem. Specifically state any criteria that must be met, including budget, time frame, quality requirements, efficiency, and simplicity.
- ◆ Compile and study information. Collect and assemble information in a logical and useful form, and study the facts to be sure that you understand everything involved.



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- ◆ List possible solutions. List all of the possible solutions. Make no attempt to rule out alternatives; use free association, visualization, and creativity to generate as many solutions as possible. Consider the possibility that a given solution could cause other problems. Decide if other actions will need to be taken to ensure a net positive effect, or if another solution altogether needs to be considered.
- ◆ Make a choice. Look over the list of possible solutions that you have made. Cross out any items that you know immediately you do not want to use. For each possible solution left on your list, answer the question, "What would happen if I chose this solution?" Then choose the one that appears to have the best possible chance of success.
- ◆ Take action. Decide what action must be taken to implement the solution. The action may be simple and require the attention of only one or two people, or it may have several steps and involve the whole department. Make sure that every person understands what to do, how, and why. Then make sure the predetermined steps are followed.
- ◆ Request feedback. Keep open the lines of communication between yourself and those who must carry out your decision. Be open to their ideas, and do not judge feedback based on your preconceived ideas about the person giving it. Let your team members know you are interested in their problems but that your instructions will be carried out. When necessary and practical, be willing to modify the plan when the feedback you receive indicates a need for adjustment.

Use Your Potential to Maximize Performance

In almost every workplace, the terms “production” and “performance” are heard. In some situations, performance and production may mean the same thing. But in most cases, a vast difference exists between the two. Production deals with what, and performance deals with how. Production focuses on the output of an organization, and performance deals with how the organization is productive.

Both production and performance are essential terms to understand. You cannot adequately measure team performance or individual efficiency without them. Without adequate measurement, there is neither an easy way nor a sure way to tell if the organization is continuing to grow and move forward. That is why understanding these terms is vitally important to organizational success.

Methods of Measurement

Productivity is output divided by input. For example, if a team’s output brings to the organization twice the revenue required to produce it, the team might be considered highly productive. Of course, if an organization expected a 10:1 return on its input investment, merely doubling that investment might seem hardly worthwhile.

Performance measurements are highly dependent on the work environment and the previous experience of the organization. If a team or organization sees mediocre productivity as the norm, peak productivity might be more of a surprise than anything else. Conversely, if the team is known throughout the organization for high productivity, anything less than that standard of excellence might raise eyebrows among members of the leadership group.

Additionally, performance standards vary depending on the nature of the organization’s business. For example, if the company generates revenue by delivering a service, the measure of performance is far more important than the measure of productivity. If the company delivers a product, on the other hand, productivity is probably more important than performance.

Leaders and managers recognize two primary methods of measuring performance: team performance and individual performance. Team performance involves a calculation of revenue earned, divided by the number of team members. High team performance involves a balancing act between managing costs and increasing output.

While team performance is a valuable measuring tool, each team member is still responsible for a portion of the organization’s monthly revenue. For that reason, most organizations attempt to measure individual performance as well. While team performance is often easily calculated, team member performance may be more difficult to judge because it requires a more subjective rating: capacity times commitment. Capacity is a measurement of capability, rated on a scale of 1 to 10, with 5 as the average. Capabilities include intelligence and experience. Commitment, on the other hand, is made up of an attitude, motivation, and initiative. All these factors focus on the ability to generate action and produce something for the team and the organization.

Measuring individual performance with the formula, capacity times commitment, means that a team member with a low capacity and high commitment can still perform well. However, a team member with high capacity and low commitment may not necessarily be a model of peak performance.

Using Your Potential

Think of your own innate potential for making a contribution to the organization. On a scale of 1 to 10, where

would you rank yourself on the use of your potential? If you increase the percentage of your potential that you actually use by just 10 percent, you may find that you can improve results by 50 to 100 percent. This is known as the multiplier effect – adding to the percentage of your potential you normally use will multiply your productivity and enhance your performance.

Leaders and organizations understand that increased usage of individual potential also increases the productivity of the organization. The challenge is to effectively utilize team member potential.

Each of us is filled with abundant potential. But it is somehow easier to see the abundance in the world around us than recognize the abundance of potential within ourselves. In fact, most people barely scratch the surface of the talents, abilities, and powers that lie within them. The need for continuous improvement is why it is so important for you and your team members to rise to a new level of excellence each quarter and every year.



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Bridging the Gap Between Potential and Performance

Since 1966, Leadership Management International™ has been bridging the gap between potential and performance by helping organizations and individuals evaluate their strengths and opportunities through implementation of the unique and proven LMI Process™.

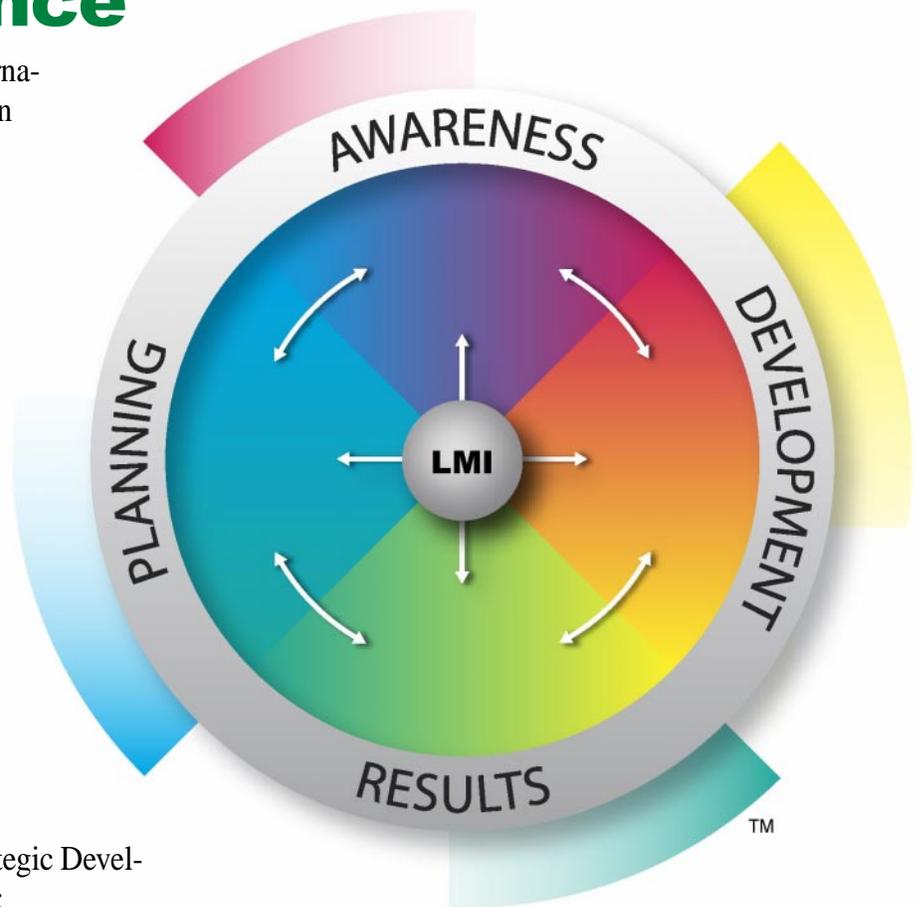
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